

WITH THANKSGIVING AND JOY

I. Philippians 1:3-11

A. When October gives way to November, we know that Thanksgiving is rapidly approaching. More than just a holiday, Thanksgiving is better celebrated as a season. And better than a season, Thanksgiving is best celebrated as a way of life. Therefore, may Thanksgiving give way to *Thanks-living!*

B. The Apostle Paul was very grateful for the Church in Philippi. His letter to them is filled with expressions of gratitude and joy. He scolds them little and praises them much. He loves these folks and they love him back. They've been generous to him, especially while in prison, and he has generously sowed the Gospel into their hearts and lives. Our text today is an expression of just that.

C. Philippians 1:3-11 (NLT) Verses on Thanksgiving, Joy, and then some...

1) **V3-5: 3** Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. **4** Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy, **5** for you have been my partners in spreading the Good News about Christ from the time you first heard it until now. (**Hear his thankfulness and joy?**)

2) **V6: 6** And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. (**God chose you to be masterpieces and won't leave your canvas empty or unfinished!**)

3) **V7-8: 7** So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you (**How's he feel? Thankful and joyful! Grateful and glad!**), for you have a special place in my heart. You share with me the special favor of God, both in my imprisonment and in defending and confirming the truth of the Good News. **8** God knows how much I love you and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus. (**I can say that about you all as well!**)

4) **V9-10: (Then Paul Prays) 9** I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding. **10** For I want you to understand what really matters, so that you may live pure and blameless lives until the day of Christ's return. (**Lives reflecting that Jesus' sacrifice on the cross is having its intended result--that the right-standing He won for you is manifesting in your lives!**)

5) **V11: (Listen to this prayerful blessing.) 11** May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation--the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ--for this will bring much glory and praise to God. (**How many want this for yourself and one another?!**)

II. Communion

A. Today we take the Bread & Cup. We may refer to this sacrament as *Communion* or *The Lord's Supper*. Both are appropriate. Some also refer to it as the *Eucharist*. Eucharist comes from the Greek words, *eucharistia* which means 'thanksgiving' and *eucharistos* which means 'grateful.'

B. **1 Corinthians 11:23-25** (ESV) bridges Communion with thanksgiving: **23** For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, **24** and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body, which is (broken) for you. Do this in remembrance of Me." **25** In the same way also He took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

C. There's great value in reading stories as well as watching powerful dramas. In a similar way, preaching presents the Gospel to our ears while Communion (and likewise Baptism) present the Gospel to our eyes. All of these are intended to present the Gospel to our hearts--again and again and again. As we prepare to take the Bread & Cup, we should do so with thanksgiving and joy. As solemn as this ordinance is, it should be taken with a deep sense of gratitude.

D. When we think of those who encountered Jesus, His love and power, how did most of them respond to their healing or deliverance or astonishing provision? With thanksgiving and joy! As you remember the cost of your salvation this morning, may your hearts also overflow with thanksgiving and joy!

* Pray and Serve Communion...

* Our Benediction today is a mashup of the verses we just read from **Philippians 1: 3** Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God. **4** Whenever I pray, I make my requests for all of you with joy... **6** And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue His work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns. **7a** So it is right that I should feel as I do about all of you, for you have a special place in my heart... **8** God knows how much I love you

and long for you with the tender compassion of Christ Jesus. **9** I pray that your love will overflow more and more, and that you will keep on growing in knowledge and understanding... **11** May you always be filled with the fruit of your salvation--the righteous character produced in your life by Jesus Christ--for this will bring much glory and praise to God.

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Philippians 1:3-11 (NLT)

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1 Corinthians 11:23-25 (ESV)

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Film Clips & Other Links

Operation Christmas Child Overview 2017

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v82lxCPBwmc&list=PLFB73FDC5656435B8>

Seven Glimpses of God - John Piper (Awesome Sermon Jam)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q5KJKAeGP40>

Loving People - Matt Chandler

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QXVAu9qfoZU>

Millersport Covenant Church Sermon Podcasts (MP3s on iTunes)

<http://millersportcc.com/feed/podcast>

Bonus Stuff

Quote by John Wesley

"I preached on the righteousness of the law and the righteousness of faith. While I was speaking, several dropped down as dead and among the rest such a cry was heard of sinners groaning for the righteousness of faith that it almost drowned my voice. But many of these soon lifted up their heads with joy and broke out into thanksgiving, being assured they now had the desire of their soul - the forgiveness of their sins."

Quote by Isaac Watts

"How divinely full of glory and pleasure shall that hour be when all the millions of mankind that have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb of God shall meet together and stand around Him, with every tongue and every heart full of joy and praise! How astonishing will be the glory and the joy of that day when all the saints shall join together in one common song of gratitude and love, and of everlasting thankfulness to this Redeemer! With that unknown delight, and inexpressible satisfaction, shall all that are saved from the ruins of sin and hell address the Lamb that was slain, and rejoice in His presence!"

Erma Bombeck on Feeling Grateful

An estimated 1.5 million people are living today after bouts with breast cancer. Every time I forget to feel grateful to be among them, I hear the voice of an eight-year-old named Christina, who had cancer of the nervous system. When asked what she wanted for her birthday, she thought long and hard and finally said, "I don't know. I have two sticker books and a Cabbage Patch doll. I have everything!" The kid is right.

- Erma Bombeck, *Redbook*, October Edition, 1992.

Now Thank We All Our God

By Pastor Martin Rinkart, 1644

Now thank we all our God, with heart and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done, in Whom this world rejoices;
Who from our mothers' arms has blessed us on our way
With countless gifts of love, and still is ours today.

O may this bounteous God through all our life be near us,
With ever joyful hearts and blessed peace to cheer us;
And keep us in His grace, and guide us when perplexed;
And free us from all ills, in this world and the next!

All praise and thanks to God the Father now be given;
The Son and Him Who reigns with Them in highest Heaven;
The one eternal God, whom earth and Heaven adore;
For thus it was, is now, and shall be evermore.

The Martin Rinkart Story

By Catherine Winkworth (1827-1878)

The following is from Catherine Winkworth's "*Christian Singers Of Germany*." She is the one who translated Martin Rinkart's hymn in the 19th century.

This classic hymn, "Now Thank We All Our God," was written by a pastor Martin Rinkart who suffered greatly through the 30 Years War in Germany during which (through war and famine) 4/5 of the population of Germany died. He himself was in extreme poverty and when the pastors of his 2 neighboring towns died he ended up having to do the work of 3 pastors, burying 4,000 people in 1637 (50 per day!) - including his wife - when the plague hit. This was followed by a famine so severe that 30-40 people could be seen in streets fighting to the death over the corpse of a dead cat. And then right after this the Swedes invaded and demanded a ridiculous amount of money in tribute. The story goes that he went to intercede with the Swedish commander to reduce the tribute and the commander refused. At this point Rinkart turned to the crowd that was with him and said "Come my children, we can find no hearing, no mercy with men. Let us take refuge with God." He then fell to his knees and prayed with such pathos that the commander reduced the tribute from \$30,000 to \$2,000. He wrote this hymn in 1644, 4 years before the Peace of Westphalia that ended the War in 1648.